

ERIE-NIAGARA REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP

25 DELAWARE AVENUE, SEVENTH FLOOR

BUFFALO, NEW YORK 14202

716-858-8859 FAX: 716-858-8895

www.erie.gov/legislature/enrp

Co-Chairs:

Hon. Clyde Burmaster

Hon. William A. Pauly

Minutes of Erie-Niagara Regional Partnership Meeting December 7, 2001

Present: Pauly, Johnston (proxy), McMahon, Meal, Morse, Weinstein, Wendel

Excused: Burmaster, Eldridge, Ferraro, Simon

Absent: Connolly, DeBenedetti, Dziedzic, Erck, Greenan, Kucharski, Lehman, O'Connor, Peoples, Rubin, Rutecki, Schuler, Villani

ENRP Administrator Tod Kniazuk called the meeting to order at 8:10 a.m. Minutes of the September, 2001 meeting were approved.

The Transportation Subcommittee report was received and filed.

On the topic of power relicensing, ENRP Member Barry Weinstein mentioned that the plan for relicensing has been selected, and that the RCC's website www.wnyrelicensing.com is up and running.

ENRP Member Hal Morse gave a report on efforts to pursue regional planning, noting that this has been a topic the ENRP has been talking about for the last year or two. There has also been private sector interest in this. A meeting occurred to discuss possible structures and "vision determination" for the effort, consisting of officials from Erie and Niagara Counties, the GBNRTC, UB, and other interested parties. The group is beginning to look at what questions need to be answered before beginning the process in earnest. They are within a few months of putting something on paper and getting out into the community. The Buffalo Niagara Partnership also seems to be pursuing some effort, but it is not linked.

Mr. Kniazuk suggested that ENRP should play a role in this effort; perhaps as the vehicle for taking the eventual plan into the community for support. ENRP Member Peter Wendel agreed that the "regional people" such as county officials need to be involved in the effort, but that local governments and the private sector need to be included as soon as possible. Mr. Morse noted that one of the goals of this effort is to strengthen local governments.

Mr. Kniazuk reported that a report of activity for the Erie-Niagara Regional Partnership was presented to the Erie and Niagara County Legislatures. In Erie, this consisted of filing the report with the Legislature's Regionalism Committee. A presentation was made before the Niagara County Legislature at one of their sessions.

(cont.)

Members: Hon. John Connolly * Hon. Albert DeBenedetti * Mr. Thomas Dziedzic * Mr. Brian Eldridge * Hon. Bradley Erck * Mr. Samuel Ferraro * Hon. John Greenan * Mr. Clyde Johnston * Mr. Thomas Kucharski * Ms. Maria Lehman * Hon. Peter McMahon * Hon. Gerald Meal * Mr. Hal Morse * Hon. Sean O'Connor * Hon. Crystal Peoples * Mr. Lawrence Rubin * Mr. David Rutecki * Mr. Kevin Schuler * Mr. John Simon * Hon. Robert Villani * Hon. Barry Weinstein, M.D. * Mr. Peter Wendel * Ad Hoc: Ms. Cyd Bennett, Mr. Richard Geiger, Mr. Luke Rich, Mr. Stan Rydelek

ENRP Members William Pauly (founding member and co-chair from day one), Robert Villani (founding member), and John Connolly were recognized and thanked for their service on the occasion of their retirement from their respective offices and from the ENRP.

Florine Luhr of the Buffalo Niagara Partnership gave a report on the bi-county land use study commissioned by the Buffalo Niagara Enterprise. The ENRP recommended this project earlier in the year, and it was subsequently funded by the two Legislatures. Ms. Luhr noted that local representatives were involved in the process and selection of Deloitte & Touche as the project consultants. They performed site visits, then simulated a site selection process. They conducted an analysis of whether our sites are ready for our targeted industries. They found that we have an adequate amount of sites today for a region our size, including “shovel-ready” sites, but that permitting remains a huge issue. The firm also gave advice on marketing these sites.

On the subject of brownfields, Deloitte & Touche found that clients want them shovel-ready or they won't look at them; they are not willing to do the reclamation. Twenty-three of the submitted sites were brownfields, but they said not to bother with them. If any business is going to be willing to reclaim these sites, it would probably be a local company with a more community-minded view of the area.

Ms. Luhr concluded by saying that now that the study is done, we need to take the report and move the issues forward. A working group originally convened to help with the study will carry-over and work on implementation.

Mr. Weinstein asked if there was any degree of specificity for each site, and also “what's next?” Ms. Luhr replied that there were specific recommendations made for each site. As for the next step, the working group will “keep working” to bring the next highest group of sites up to shovel-ready status.

Mr. Weinstein also commented that permitting is really still the biggest issue in getting firms to locate here. Ms. Luhr agreed, noting that compared to other regions we are too slow. Bringing the process down to two to three weeks would be reasonable. Mr. Weinstein concluded by saying that trying to impact the permitting process would be an appropriate project for the ENRP.

ENRP Member Peter McMahon suggested that all local governments be made aware of the sites in their municipality that were included in the study, and the suggestions for those sites. This way the localities could also work on improving them. Ms. Luhr promised to do this. ENRP Member Gerald Meal asked how many shovel-ready sites we have. The answer is 17.

ENRP Co-Chair Pauly thanked all members for their attendance and interest. Mr. Pauly also commended Mr. Kniazuk for his work on behalf of the organization. The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 a.m.